Human rights NGOs meet DPR members: TAPOL report, 14 November 1991. TL4920

Three human rights organisations in Jakarta, Infight (the Indonesian Front for Human Rights), LPHAM (Institute for the Defence of Human Rights) and the League to Uphold Justice have expressed their profound disquiet at the shootings that occurred in Dili East Timor on 12 November 1991.

Representatives of the three organisations went to the People's Legislative Assembly (DPR) where they met four MPs from the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).

They urged the DPR to set up a fact-finding commission composed of DPR members, human rights organisations and individuals with a known commitment to the principles of human rights.

The three organisations also urged the DPR to do everything possible to have the persons responsible for the shootings brought to justice. The DPR should, they said, call on the armed forces commander-in-chief, General Try Sutrisno, to publicise the names of the fifty persons who, he admits, have been killed.

The human rights activists also expressed their deep concern at the news being published in the Indonesian press about the events in Dili. They drew attention to comments by Professor Kooijmans, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, who was in Dili at the time of the massacre.

The three organisations today met Professor Kooijmans in Jakarta. He told them he would be submitting a report about this incident to the Indonesian Government and the UN Secretary-General by January next year. He estimates that between 50 and 60 people were killed when troops opened fire at the Santa Cruz cemetery, but said the death toll could well rise because so many people were seriously wounded. He said he thought that about sixty people are still in detention. He was not able to confirm reports that some detainees who were on the army's blacklist had been executed while in custody.

The human rights delegation said it was essential for the armed forces commander-in-chief to allow relatives of the casualties to collect the bodies of those killed in the massacre for burial. Relatives of those in hospital should be allowed to visit them.

The delegation also reminded the DPR members that there have been many such acts of violence perpetrated by the armed forces, referring in particular to the massacres at Tanjung Priok in September 1984, in Lampung in February 1987, and the killings in Aceh in the past few years.

One member of the delegation, Chris Siner Keytimu, who is also a member of the Petition-of-50 Group, asked the DPR members whether they were aware of a letter written by Bishop Belo to the Indonesian Bishop's Conference. He refused an invitation to attend the annual meeting of the Conference in November this year, in protest at the "arrogance of the armed forces" on 28 October. The DPR members said they knew nothing about the letter.